

Message Text

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17/44

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 EA-06

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 AID-05 PC-01 OMB-01 /063 W

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9890

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARAS 3 AND 5)

FOLLOWING REPEAT BOMBAY 1720 SENT ACTION NEW DELHI INGO
CALCUTTA/MADRAS. DTD 11 JUL 75.

QUOTE

BOMBAY 1720

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT IN

SUBJ: PM'S CURRENT INTERVIEW

1. A NUMBER OF PM GANDHI'S ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS BY CURRENT
EDITOR AYUB SYED, APPEARING IN THE JULY 12 ISSUE OF CURRENT,
ARE INTERESTING AND MANY HAVE ALREADY APPEARED IN PRINT. THE
HIGHLIGHTS OF THE INTERVIEW ARE TRANSMITTED HEREIN.

2. IN OPENING THE INTERVIEW, SYED REMARKED THAT "REACTIONARIES AT
HOME AND THEIR FRIENDS ABROAD" SAY THAT THE PM HAS "FINISHED
DEMOCRACY IN INDIA" AND ASKED FOR HER REACTION. MRS GANDHI'S
COMPLETE REPLY TO THIS, PRINTED IN BOLDFACE IN CURRENT FOR
EMPHASIS, FOLLOWS:

QUOTE WELL, I CAN'T THINK OF ANYBODY ELSE WHO HAS DONE MORE TO
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TRY AND STRENGTHEN DEMOCRACY IN INDIA. THE PEOPLE WHO ARE TODAY

CRITICISING US OR ACCUSING US ARE THE SAME PEOPLE WHO SUPPORTED--
NOT IN INDIA BUT ABROAD--YAHYA KHAN IN 1971. NOW, I DON'T KNOW
WHETHER THEY WOULD SAY THAT IS A PERFECT DEMOCRACY

TODAY THEY ARE FULLY SUPPORTING CHINA. DO THEY THINK THERE
IS DEMOCRACY THERE? SO, ONE CANNOT TAKE VERY SERIOUSLY
THEIR FEELING FOR DEMOCRACY IN OTHER COUNTRIES. WE DO NOT
WANT CERTIFICATES FROM THEM.

I HAVE ALWAYS SAID AND I STILL BELIEVE THAT DEMOCRACY IS
THE ONLY SYSTEM WHICH GIVES STRENGTH TO THE PEOPLE AND,
THEREFORE, OF ALL THE AVAILABLE SYSTEMS, IT IS THE BEST. BUT
DEMOCRACY DOES MEAN CERTAIN RESPONSIBILITIES ON THE PART
OF THE GOVERNMENT TO ALLOW FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND SO ON,
BUT EQUALLY IT ENJOINS RESPONSIBILITY ON THE OPPOSITION TO
ALLOW THE GOVERNMENT TO FUNCTION.

NOW I FEEL THAT OUR DEMOCRACY HAD GONE SOMEWHAT OFF THE
RAILS, THAT IS, THE VERY VOCAL MINORITY WAS TRYING TO
SUPPRESS THE MAJORITY. THIS IS NOT DEMOCRACY IN ANY
COUNTRY OR ANY LANGUAGE. UNQUOTE.

3. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION CONCERNING "WHAT KIND OF
POLITICAL SYSTEM YOU ARE GOING TO EVOLVE," THE PM REPLIED
THAT HER "WISHES ARE FOR A DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM." SHE WENT
ON TO SAY, HOWEVER, THAT "DEMOCRACY CAN EXIST ONLY IF THERE
IS A CORRESPONDING SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY AMONGST THE
OPPOSITION." IF THE OPPOSITION WINS, IT FORMS THE GOVERNMENT,
"BUT WHOEVER IS IN THE GOVERNMENT, OR WHOEVER IN THE
OPPOSITION, ONCE THE ELECTIONS ARE OVER, THERE MUST BE A
CERTAIN AMOUNT OF COOPERATION IN FUNCTIONING." SHE POINTED
TO TAMILNADU WHERE, "IF WE HAD WANTED, WE COULD HAVE
PREVENTED THE FUNCTIONING OF THE OPPOSITION GOVERNMENTS."

4. TURNING TO GUJARAT, THE PM SAID SHE "CERTAINLY WILL DO
NOTHING TO UPSET" THE GUJARAT GOVERNMENT, BUT IF THAT
GOVERNMENT DOES NOT COOPERATE, "THEN IT IS VERY DIFFICULT."
SHE WENT ON TO SAY IN THIS REGARD THAT "THE CENTRE DOES NOT
HAMPER GOVERNMENTS, BUT ON THE CONTRARY, IT TRIES TO HELP THEM..."
IN REPLY TO SYED'S OBSERVATION THAT THE ATTITUDE IN GUJARAT
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AT THE MOMENT IS NOT TO CARRY OUT THE ORDERS OF THE CENTRE,"
MRS GANDHI REPLIED "WELL, I DON'T KNOW. I THINK THEY
WANT TO PROTEST A BIT ABOUT THE EMERGENCY AND SO ON. BUT
OTHERWISE I DO NOT THINK..."

5. NOT SURPRISINGLY, MRS GANDHI DEFENDED THE BAN ON THE
RSS AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS SAYING THAT "OBVIOUSLY" THE
RSS AND NAXALITES, FOR EXAMPLE, "WANT TO TAKE THE COUNTRY

TOWARD ANARCHY WHEN THE GREATEST NEED FOR THE COUNTRY IS STABILITY AND STRENGTH." SHE BELIEVES THAT "INVOLVEMENT OF THE PEOPLE" IS IMPORTANT TO THE SUCCESS OF HER ECONOMIC PROGRAM SAYING THAT "UNLESS THE WORKERS FEEL INVOLVED, PRODUCTION CANNOT GO UP." FOR HER OWN BRAND OF SOCIALISM TO EVOLVE, SHE SAID, "IT IS ESSENTIAL TO HAVE GREATER EQUALITY ECONOMICALLY AND SOCIALLY, THAT IS, AMONG THE PEOPLE OF DIFFERENT RELIGIONS, CASTES, AND SO ON."

6. MRS GANDHI ALSO DEFENDED THE ARREST OF THE OPPOSITION LEADERS AS "NECESSARY TO AVOID ANY TROUBLE BECAUSE IT WOULD HAVE BEEN THEIR EFFORT TO PROVOKE VIOLENCE. THAT WOULD NOT HAVE CREATED A GOOD SITUATION," SO THE ARRESTS WERE "MORE TO KEEP THE PEACE." IN RESPONSE TO A DIRECT QUESTION ON HOW LONG THEY MIGHT BE JAILED, MRS GANDHI REPLIED THAT SHE "CAN'T SAY AT ALL." ON THE "LINKS BETWEEN THE REACTIONARIES AT HOME AND THOSE ABROAD," SHE REPLIED THAT SHE "SHOULD HAVE THOUGHT THAT ANY PATRIOTIC PERSON WOULD NOT HAVE SUCH LINKS AND CERTAINLY IF THERE ARE ANY, WE SHOULD DO OUR BEST TO SEVER THEM.

7. THE PRIME MINISTER ALSO DEFENDED CENSORSHIP, SAYING THAT "AT THIS MOMENT WE HAD TO HAVE CENSORSHIP" BUT SHE WENT ON TO SAY THAT "CERTAIN CODES OF CONDUCT SHOULD BE EVOLVED AND THEN WE SHOULD SEE THAT PEOPLE STICK TO THEM". THE PRESS ITSELF WILL HAVE TO WORK OUT SOME FORMULA UNDER WHICH TO OPERATE. "IT WAS ONLY A FEW PAPERS THAT DID THIS," SHE SAID, "AND THE REST ARE PENALIZED. I SHOULD THINK THE OTHERS SHOULD HAVE WOKEN UP TO THE FACT THAT SOME OF THEM WERE NOT BRINGING A GOOD NAME TO THE PRESS".

8. WE WILL SUBMIT THE PM'S COMMENTS ON LABOR SEPARATELY.

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UNQUOTE.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DEMOCRACY, POLITICAL REPRESSION, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, POLITICAL LEADERS, PRESS CONFERENCES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 JUL 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: KelleyW0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975NEWDE09323
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750243-0789
From: NEW DELHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750764/aaaacfnstel
Line Count: 156
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: KelleyW0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06 AUG 2003 by ElyME>; APPROVED <01 DEC 2003 by KelleyW0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PM'S CURRENT INTERVIEW
TAGS: PINT, IN, CURRENT, (GANDHI, INDIRA), (SYED, AYUB)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006